

tained in the volume. For instance, in an introductory essay, Easwaran entertainingly encourages readers to begin her and now the arduous work of hewing away all the unwanted effects of our heredity, conditioning, environment and latencies so as to one day become the 'effulgent spiritual being' we really are.

In a valuable section near the end of the book, another essay by Easwaran on the 'Message of the Scriptures' elaborates on seven other important spiritual practices. The second is the regular repetition of a holy word or phrase, called a mantram, followed by learning to slow down, training our senses to be our servants and not our masters, practicing one-pointed attention, putting the welfare of others first, reading for inspiration from world mysticism, and spiritual association with others who are pursuing similar goals. There is a useful section of biographical notes which provides additional interesting information about the origination of the passages. A useful index by author and source and another of titles and first lines are helpful as references.

Still another practical addition tells readers how to use inspirational passages to change negative thinking to more positive attitudes and practices.

All of these passages have been used by men and women in daily meditation within varying traditions for decades and even centuries. However, even if one doesn't meditate, the passages are richly appropriate in many other ways. For instance, they can be taught to children or 'read aloud to the dying, and turned to for renewal and comfort in the press of daily life.' Thus, they are intended 'not only for meditation corners but also for bedside tables and coffee tables, backpacks and briefcases, classrooms and clinics as well as chapels, sanatoriums and sanctuaries.

Many of the sources for these passages will be familiar, such as those from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita, or the Upanishads. There are in addition, many other passages perhaps less familiar, from Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and the Sufi and Native American traditions, which are equally in-

spiring. As stated in an essay by the editors at the end of the book, "When we read these inspired words, reflect on them, write them out, memorize them, or meditate on them with profound concentration, they have the capacity to sink into our consciousness alive with the charge of mystical awareness that first drew them forth."

Thus, the book includes words from the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu and Seng Ts'an, and passages from the Jewish liturgy. There are also passages from Hinduism, including beautiful lines from Mahatma Gandhi and Shankara, Tukaram and Meera. From Buddhism, of course, there are lengthy portions from the Dhammapada and Sutta Nipata. The Sufi tradition includes selections from Ansari of Herat, Baba Kuhi of Shiraz, and Jalaluddin Rumi. The Native American tradition is represented by a single passage perhaps familiar to many, 'Let Me Walk in Beauty,' attributed to Chief Yellow Lark. However, in this reviewer's opinion, it is regrettable that nothing appears from the eloquent Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph.

The book's intriguing title has been taken from a hymn found in the Rig Veda, which contains the most ancient portions of the Hindu scriptures, probably the oldest mystical documents in the world. It is thought that these hymns and invocations have existed in written form centuries before Christ, but precisely how long they were preserved before that in India's long oral tradition is not known. Here is the complete hymn, translated specifically for use in meditation by Easwaran:

God makes the rivers to flow,  
they tire not, nor  
do they cease from flowing. May  
the river of my life  
flow into the sea of love that is  
the Lord.

Many readers acquainted with the life of Mahatma Gandhi will recall that he invited friends and reporters, women and men of all ages and nationalities to attend his morning and evening prayer gatherings on the grounds of his ashram in central India. From a collection of his writings titled, 'My Religion,' there is a selection included in this book which has great appeal for anyone attempting to incor-

porate into his or her own life portions of inspiration from the world's spiritual figures. It is titled 'The Path,' and particularly recommended for use in transforming negative thinking or habits into positive attitudes and practices.

Other passages that have deep appeal in the book range from: Twin Verses from the Dhammapada, The Buddha, 86; Epistle of Love St Paul, 140; The Setu Prayer Eknath Easwaran, 153; Prayer for Peace Hazrat Inayat Khan, 139, and more.

### **Arts of Living: Reinventing the Humanities for the Twenty First Century**

By Kurt Spellmeyer, New York, State University of New York Press, 2003. vii, 311 pp. \$26.95, paper

**Reviewer: Khaled Aljenfawi,**  
Illinois State University

One can safely place Kurt Spellmeyer's book within the continuing debate about the condition of the humanities in the Twenty-First Century. Spellmeyer discusses what he perceives as the eventual "fate" of the humanities if it does not change (3). He explains that the crises that the humanities have undergone in recent decades resulted in "declining enrollments [of students] while the number of majors has doubled" (3). Spellmeyer diligently traces and links this decline in the humanities to the specialization and professionalization of the field. His book consists of two major parts, each divided into five chapters. In part one, Spellmeyer declares his book's argument; "the humanities must change" or else "the unthinkable" will become a "possibility" (3). What Spellmeyer describes as "unthinkable" is that "our enjoyment of the arts might abruptly die away" (3). According to Spellmeyer, the humanities must change because they have stopped being relevant to ordinary citizens in their struggle "to gain control over their own lives" (7). Like Gerald Graff, James Berlin, and others who have written about the history of English in American higher education, Spellmeyer traces the development of the humanities from the nineteenth century and explains that professionalization and specialization has created a special kind of knowledge that only specialists can master. This focus on specialization in the humanities, he

argues, has had disastrous consequences for the appreciation of art. Instead of acknowledging art as a creative process, critics started to treat it as an artifact: the privileging of specialization in English leading to a fetishization of culture.

More specifically, Spellmeyer identifies the 1960s as a critical turning point in the growing irrelevancy of the humanities, linking the culture of specialization and the emergence of literary theory as developments that create social isolation between the humanities as a discipline and the general public (38).

In part two, Spellmeyer explains that theory has actually created a prestige that seems to have entrapped the humanities, making it very difficult for scholars to interact with the outside world. Indeed, theory according to Spellmeyer, has turned into an implicit imperialist endeavor where Asian and African students pay homage to Derrida and Foucault. In Spellmeyer's view, humanities' infatuation with criticism and critique currently prevent the democratization of the humanities and their transformation into arts of living that can be accessed by everyone. Spellmeyer sees hope for renewal of the humanities coming from a rather unusual source: the discourse of the New Age spirituality. The inner life discourse of the New Age increasingly attracts new followers because it offers unconditional freedom to individuals that the humanities fails to provide. Indeed, according to Spellmeyer, the humanities should reinvent itself with a focus directed toward self-cultivation through placing the arts at the center of its preoccupation. However, he does not explain to us exactly what he means by the discourse of the New Age, or whether its spiritual dimension represents one specific spiritual experience. Finally, Spellmeyer calls for intellectuals to go on a journey inside the humanities by using interdisciplinary approaches to discover that there is really an ongoing breakdown of this system. Indeed, many intellectuals are defecting from the culture of specialization toward more appreciation of the experiences of ordinary people. He sees the hope of this discovery in current debates about his new curriculum that can provide a

new hope for the humanities as a field and as a discipline, and to the larger intellectual debate about how to enable individuals gain more control of their lives.

---

### **Landmines and Human Security: International Politics and War's Hidden Legacy**

By Richard Matthew, Bryan McDonald, and Ken Rutherford (editors). 320 pp. State University of New York Press, 2004. ISBN 0791463095

Reviewer: Susan Maret Ph.D.,

University of Colorado, Denver

*Landmines and Human Security: International Politics and War's Hidden Legacy*, a 2004 title in the SUNY Series in Global Politics, offers a multifaceted analysis of the global struggle to identify, abolish, and remove antipersonnel mines, international efforts to assist victims, and the underlying politics of responsibility that drives the humanitarian antipersonnel mine movement. "Inspired by the concept of participatory research," editors Richard A. Matthew, Associate Professor of International and Environmental Politics and Director of the Center for Unconventional Security Affairs at the University of California at Irvine, Bryan McDonald, Assistant Director of the Center for Unconventional Security Affairs at the University of California at Irvine, and Kenneth R. Rutherford, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Southwest Missouri State University and co-founder of the Landmine Survivors Network, *Landmines and Human Security* reflects the experiences of practitioners, policymakers, scholars, and demining experts from the transnational antipersonnel landmine community.

*Landmines and Human Security* begins with forewords by five notable figures long associated with landmine issues; The Honorable Lloyd Axworthy, Heather Mills McCartney, Paul McCartney, Queen Noor and Senator Patrick Leahy, who crafted the first U.S. law to ban the export of landmine related weapons. As its title suggests, *Landmines and Human Security* is a work not only related to antipersonnel landmine policy, but also concerned with the idea of "human security."

The book's title is, in a sense, a double entendre: landmines ostensibly provide "security" for troops in the form of an invisible measure against chase, invasion or assault. But landmines, as a "perverse use of technology." Have unintended consequences.<sup>1</sup> Not only do antipersonnel mines pose maneuverability problems for troops, but they lay in wait in former battle sites. For example Rommels "Devil's Garden" in El Alamein, Egypt, where landmines were extensively used during the North Africa campaign, threaten security some sixty or so years post-conflict. Human security is further challenged by poor landmine record keeping practices. Lack of historical information regarding prior use of landmines complicates both landmine identification and demining, make it impossible in some areas of the world to live in peace.

In heavily mined countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, according to contributing author Nay Htun (171-174), landmines have also "impeded socioeconomic development" as well as exacerbated landmine victim poverty and isolation. Human security – the right to livelihood, food and safety in one's land – is violated by the presence and persistence of antipersonnel mines. So much so that the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), an umbrella network of approximately one thousand nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), estimates that uncleared antipersonnel mines are responsible for approximately 15,00 and 20,000 annual casualties. Most of these victims are civilians who require immediate medical assistance and long term rehabilitation.<sup>2</sup> As Raquel Willerman (103) of the Landmine Survivors Network notes in her contributing article, of the 300,000 landmine survivors worldwide, more than half die before they reach medical care. Antipersonnel mines are an "equal opportunity weapon," in that they do not distinguish between battle, and innocent civilians and wildlife at ceasefire.

Articles included in *Landmines and Human Security* are arranged by way of topical sections titled "The Global Landmine Crisis," "Perspectives on the Mine Ban Movement," "Demining and Victim Assistance,"

Copyright of International Journal of Humanities & Peace is the property of International Journal of Humanities & Peace and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

Copyright of International Journal of Humanities & Peace is the property of International Journal of Humanities & Peace and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.